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Letter dated 25 August 2011 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the attached position of the Republic of Belarus on sanctions against Belarusian enterprises (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under item 17 (a) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Zoya **Kolontai**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/66/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 25 August 2011 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Position of the Republic of Belarus regarding the sanctions imposed on Belarusian companies by the United States of America

On 11 August 2011, the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Department of the Treasury introduced sanctions against four joint-stock companies belonging to the Belneftekhim group: Belshina, Grodno Azot, Grodno Khimvolokno and Naftan.

In accordance with this decision, the companies have been added to the special list of individuals and companies whose assets and property interests are blocked in the United States. Both physical and legal United States persons are prohibited from dealing with these companies. The reason given by the United States for imposing the sanctions is alleged "human rights abuses related to political oppression in Belarus".

Belarus believes that the decision taken by the United States Government to impose economic restrictive measures on the Republic of Belarus is unjustified and illegal. Belarus considers the measures to be politically motivated and that they undermine the economic foundation of bilateral cooperation.

The actions of the United States are a gross violation of the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, in which the United States undertook not to use coercive economic measures against the Republic of Belarus in exchange for its voluntary renunciation of nuclear weapons.

The decision of the United States is especially surprising given that the security assurances for Belarus set out in the memorandum were confirmed by the United States in a joint statement issued by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the United States Secretary of State at the conclusion of their meeting in Astana on 1 December 2010.

Furthermore, as a signatory of the Helsinki Final Act, the United States has undertaken "to refrain from any act of economic coercion designed to subordinate to their own interest the exercise by another participating State of the rights inherent in its sovereignty".

The actions of the United States also run counter to General Assembly resolution 62/183, according to which "no State may use or encourage the use of unilateral economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights". General Assembly resolution 62/162 on human rights and unilateral coercive measures urged all States to "stop adopting or implementing any unilateral measures not in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States, in particular those of a coercive nature with all their extraterritorial effects".

The methods of intimidation, economic pressure and coercion used by the United States against the Republic of Belarus are totally unacceptable in international practice and can only lead to an escalation of tension in relations between sovereign States and in the international arena as a whole.

The claims that the sanctions are not directed at ordinary people are false, since approximately 40,000 people are employed by the companies subject to the sanctions. The sanctions apply direct pressure on the social and economic well-being of the people working in those companies.

The United States sanctions against the four Belarusian companies are a form of unfair competition against these distinguished and world-renowned companies. These companies work exclusively to further the economic interests of the Belarusian people as a whole. Their business dealings are transparent and they support numerous socially useful projects. Thanks to a successful marketing strategy, they have expanded their scientific, technical, manufacturing and human resource capacities and gradually strengthened their positions on international markets. Consequently, any constraint imposed on the work of these businesses is a blow not only to the companies and their employees but to the interests of all Belarusian citizens.

In view of the escalation of unfriendly acts by the United States against Belarus and its people, Belarus has been forced to place on hold several projects for bilateral cooperation with the United States. Specifically, it has been decided to suspend talks with the United States concerning the exchange of highly enriched nuclear fuel for low-grade enriched nuclear fuel. Nonetheless, Belarus continues to abide scrupulously by its international commitments in the area of non-proliferation and to take full responsibility for physical nuclear security. Belarus has also suspended its participation in the creation of a Master of Business Administration programme at the Riga School of Business.

In connection with the imposition of sanctions, Belarus reserves the right to respond with other appropriate measures.